

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7641

USMISSION GENEVA

INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2694

LIMDIS

GENEVA FOR CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UR

SUBJECT: BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS FOR CORRESPONDENTS

REF: A. GENEVA 1261, B. GENEVA 0569, C. GENEVA 572

1. FYI, CORRECT AIRGRAM NUMBER MOSCOW A-80, NOT A-20 PER
REFTEL A.

2. REQUESTED SALIENT POINTS OF AIRGRAM FOLLOW:

-- BASIC PROBLEM FOR CORRESPONDENTS REMAINS SEVERELY LIMITED
ACCESS TO EVEN BREAD-AND-BUTTER STORIES, WITH ALL REQUEST
SUPPOSED TO GO THROUGH OFTEN-UNRESPONSIVE MFA PRESS SECTION
OR NOVOSTI (WHICH CHARGES FOR ITS SERVICES);

-- HARASSMENT STILL CROPS UP, AS WHEN NY TIMES CORRESPONDENT
CLARITY, ARRIVING MOSCOW JAN. 4, HAD FIVE BOOKS AND EVEN
TIMES ARTICLES TAKEN BY CUSTOMS INSPECTOR WITHOUT GETTING
RECEIPT FOR FORMER;

-- FOR APOLLO-SOYUZ SPACE SHOT, PRESS WILL BE LIMITED TO
HOTEL INTOURIST PRESS CENTER (WITH TACIT COMPLIANCE, IT MUST
BE NOTED, BY NASA);

-- TRAVEL CONDITIONS SHOULD BE EASED AND TRAVEL POSSIBILITIES

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WIDENED;

-- MULTIPLE EXIT/ENTRY VISAS SHOULD BE PROVIDED;
-- ON OTHER HAND, HAVE BEEN SIGNS AND INSTANCES OF BETTER TREATMENT, E.G., TWO NEW CORRESPONDENTS HAVE BEEN ACCREDITED WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY AND MFA PRESS SECTION CHIEF AGREEABLE TO MEET WITH ALL U.S. CORRESPONDENTS IN MARCH FOR ANOTHER SERIES OF PRE-SUMMIT MEETINGS ON POSSIBLE COVERAGE AND TO AIR COMPLAINTS (ALSO DONE LAST SPRING).

3. RE SWISS TEXT, MOST COMMON JOURNALISTS COMPLAINTS ARE BASIS OF FOLLOWING COMMENTS SERIATIM PER REFTEL B:

-- VISA APPLICATIONS HAVE OFTEN BEEN UNRESOLVED FOR MANY WEEKS OR LONGER;
-- WHILE NOBODY HAS YET BEEN DENIED EXIT VISA FOR EMERGENCY OR OTHER URGENT REQUEST, SEVERAL LAST-MINUTE SCRAMBLES, ESPECIALLY ON WEEKENDS, HAVE BEEN CLIFF-HANGERS THAT COULD BE AVOIDED FOR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE BY GRANTING MULTIPLE EXIT/ENTRY VISAS;
-- WORDING ON INTERNAL TRAVEL PERMIT, ESPECIALLY "FACILITATE," DOES NOT ADVANCE CURRENT UNCERTAIN SITUATION, IN WHICH MANY REQUESTS, E.G. TO COVER HARVEST, ARE UNANSWERED UNTIL STORY DEAD (EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS "GREATER FREEDOM OF TRAVEL" WORDING IN REFTEL C);
-- "WIDER OPPORTUNITIES" SECTION IGNORES ACCESS TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, MUCH LESS "FREE AND DIRECT CONTACT" WITH THEM AS RECOMMENDED IN NATO DRAFT (REFTEL C), AND FORCES CONTINUED RELIANCE ON LIMITED NUMBER OF SANITIZED OFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS;
-- ON LAST POINT REFTEL B, TIMELY DESPATCH OF TV FILM OFTEN DELAYED THROUGH SLOW AIRPORT PROCEDURES, WHILE TASS STILL WILL NOT TRANSMIT AP AND UPI PHOTOS CONSIDERED ANTI-SOVIET.
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